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Virginia Vermiculite LLC Mine Receives National Reclamation Award

- *Virginia Vermiculite is one of only two companies mining vermiculite in the United States* -

Boswell's Tavern, VA – Virginia Vermiculite LLC was recently named a 2012 national award winner by the Interstate Mining Compact Commission for excellence in the reclamation of its R.E. Sansom Mine located near Boswell's Tavern in Louisa County. The 130 acre mine was selected based on the company's achievements in compliance; contemporaneous reclamation; drainage control; reclamation success and innovativeness.

According to Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy Director Conrad T. Spangler, III, Virginia Vermiculite LLC continues a tradition of Virginia mineral mining companies receiving national awards for their exemplary accomplishments in returning mined land to original and productive uses. "The R.E. Sansom mine is the fourth Virginia mineral mine selected for national recognition by the IMCC in less than 10 years," said Spangler.

Louisa County is home to large and small farms, some of historical importance. Virginia Vermiculite is one of only two companies in the United States mining this mineral (vermiculite), which is geologically similar to mica.

The vermiculite makes up about 25% of the mined raw material. A wet process is used to separate the mineral from the raw feed and the balance of the mined material is returned to mined-out pits in slurry form. The tailings from the processing plant were returned to the pit. Following a drying out period, the area was graded to nearly its original contour. The mine experienced a shortage of top soil on site and was able to arrange for excess soil from a nearby commercial project to be used. This was a win-win situation as the developer removed excess material at a relatively low cost, and the mine operator got the material brought in and spread at no cost.

The reclamation site encompasses the original processing plant site, raw and finished material storage areas, equipment shop and pit/pond area. After topsoil replacement, the operator used a

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variety of seed mixtures to enhance the post-mining land use of pastureland and grazing. The operator also improved drainage and erosion control to preserve the topography of the area.

The property encompassing the R.E. Sansom Mine is one of very few mineral sites where nearly all of the land was returned to its original contour and use. The property owner did not want ponds of any type left following mining and in fact, gained acreage following mining. The land owner also requested that specific structures be left in place for his cattle operations, including pole barns for hay and farm equipment and truck scales for weighing cattle.

The farm has been accepted into the Virginia Outdoors Foundation conservation easement program, which limits future property development while leaving the land in private ownership. The property is also part of the first rural National Historic District designated and administered by the National Park Service.

Other Virginia mineral mining companies receiving IMCC recognition include Kyanite Mining Corporation in 2003, Vulcan Construction Materials in 2006, and Iluka Resources, Inc. in 2009. The IMCC is a multi-state governmental organization representing the natural resource and environmental protection interests of its 24 member states in Washington, DC.

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